BEFORE THE BOARD OF REGISTERED NURSING DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS STATE OF CALIFORNIA

In the Matter of the Statement of Issues Against:

KATHERINE NAOMI HIGGINS

Case No. 2012 – 318

Applicant for Registered Nurse License

Respondent

DECISION AND ORDER

The attached Stipulated Settlement and Disciplinary Order is hereby adopted by the Board of Registered Nursing, Department of Consumer Affairs, as its Decision in the above entitled matter.

This Decision shall become effective on August 30, 2012.

IT IS SO ORDERED July 31, 2012.

Raymond Mallel, President

Board of Registered Nursing

Department of Consumer Affairs

State of California

1	KAMALA D. HARRIS		
2	Attorney General of California FRANK H. PACOE		
3	Supervising Deputy Attorney General State Bar No. 91740	·	
4	455 Golden Gate Avenue, Suite 11000 San Francisco, CA 94102-7004		
5	Telephone: (415) 703-5556 Facsimile: (415) 703-5480		
	Attorneys for Complainant		
6	DEFORE THE		
7	BEFORE THE BOARD OF REGISTERED NURSING		
8	DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS STATE OF CALIFORNIA		
9			
10	In the Matter of the Statement of Issues Against:	Case No. 2012-318	
11	KATHERINE NAOMI HIGGINS	STIPULATED SETTLEMENT AND	
12	728382 Mile Road	DISCIPLINARY ORDER	
13	Twentynine Palms, CA 92277		
14	Respondent.	:	
15			
16			
17	IT IS HEREBY STIPULATED AND AGREED by and between the parties to the above-		
18	entitled proceedings that the following matters are true:		
19	<u>PARTIES</u>		
20	1. Louise R. Bailey, M.Ed., RN (Complainant) is the Interim Executive Officer of the		
21	Board of Registered Nursing. She brought this action solely in her official capacity and is		
22	represented in this matter by Kamala D. Harris, Attorney General of the State of California, by		
23	Frank H. Pacoe, Supervising Deputy Attorney General.		
24	2. Respondent Katherine Naomi Higgins (Respondent) is represented in this proceeding		
25	by attorney Kevin C. Murphy, Esq., whose address is: Murphy Jones LLP, 625 Broadway, Suite		
26	600, San Diego, CA 92101.		
27	3. On or about February 17, 2011, Respondent filed an application dated February 3,		
28	2011, with the Board of Registered Nursing to o	btain a Registered Nurse License.	

JURISDICTION

- 4. Statement of Issues No. 2012-318 was filed before the Board of Registered Nursing (Board), Department of Consumer Affairs, and is currently pending against Respondent. The Statement of Issues and all other statutorily required documents were properly served on Respondent on November 23, 2011.
- 5. A copy of Statement of Issues No. 2012-318 is attached as Exhibit A and incorporated herein by reference.

ADVISEMENT AND WAIVERS

- 6. Respondent has carefully read, fully discussed with counsel, and understands the charges and allegations in Statement of Issues No. 2012-318. Respondent has also carefully read, fully discussed with counsel, and understands the effects of this Stipulated Settlement and Disciplinary Order.
- 7. Respondent is fully aware of her legal rights in this matter, including the right to a hearing on the charges and allegations in the Statement of Issues; the right to be represented by counsel at her own expense; the right to confront and cross-examine the witnesses against her; the right to present evidence and to testify on her own behalf; the right to the issuance of subpoenas to compel the attendance of witnesses and the production of documents; the right to reconsideration and court review of an adverse decision; and all other rights accorded by the California Administrative Procedure Act and other applicable laws.
- 8. Respondent voluntarily, knowingly, and intelligently waives and gives up each and every right set forth above.

CULPABILITY

- 9. Respondent admits the truth of each and every charge and allegation in Statement of Issues No. 2012-318.
- 10. Respondent agrees that her Registered Nurse License is subject to denial and she agrees to be bound by the Board's probationary terms as set forth in the Disciplinary Order below.

/ / / / / /

RESERVATION

11. The admissions made by Respondent herein are only for the purposes of this proceeding, or any other proceedings in which the Board of Registered Nursing or other professional licensing agency is involved, and shall not be admissible in any other criminal or civil proceeding.

CONTINGENCY

- 12. This stipulation shall be subject to approval by the Board of Registered Nursing. Respondent understands and agrees that counsel for Complainant and the staff of the Board of Registered Nursing may communicate directly with the Board regarding this stipulation and settlement, without notice to or participation by Respondent or her counsel. By signing the stipulation, Respondent understands and agrees that she may not withdraw her agreement or seek to rescind the stipulation prior to the time the Board considers and acts upon it. If the Board fails to adopt this stipulation as its Decision and Order, the Stipulated Settlement and Disciplinary Order shall be of no force or effect, except for this paragraph, it shall be inadmissible in any legal action between the parties, and the Board shall not be disqualified from further action by having considered this matter.
- 13. The parties understand and agree that facsimile copies of this Stipulated Settlement and Disciplinary Order, including facsimile signatures thereto, shall have the same force and effect as the originals.
- 14. This Stipulated Settlement and Disciplinary Order is intended by the parties to be an integrated writing representing the complete, final, and exclusive embodiment of their agreement. It supersedes any and all prior or contemporaneous agreements, understandings, discussions, negotiations, and commitments (written or oral). This Stipulated Settlement and Disciplinary Order may not be altered, amended, modified, supplemented, or otherwise changed except by a writing executed by an authorized representative of each of the parties.
- 15. In consideration of the foregoing admissions and stipulations, the parties agree that the Board may, without further notice or formal proceeding, issue and enter the following Disciplinary Order:

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED The application of Respondent Katherine Naomi Higgins for licensure is hereby granted. Upon successful completion of the licensure examination and all other licensing requirements, a license shall be issued to Respondent. Said license shall immediately be revoked, the order of revocation stayed and Respondent placed on probation for a period of three (3) years on the following conditions:

Severability Clause. Each condition of probation contained herein is a separate and distinct condition. If any condition of this Order, or any application thereof, is declared unenforceable in whole, in part, or to any extent, the remainder of this Order, and all other applications thereof, shall not be affected. Each condition of this Order shall separately be valid and enforceable to the fullest extent permitted by law.

1. **Obey All Laws.** Respondent shall obey all federal, state and local laws. A full and detailed account of any and all violations of law shall be reported by Respondent to the Board in writing within seventy-two (72) hours of occurrence. To permit monitoring of compliance with this condition, Respondent shall submit completed fingerprint forms and fingerprint fees within 45 days of the effective date of the decision, unless previously submitted as part of the licensure application process.

Criminal Court Orders: If Respondent is under criminal court orders, including probation or parole, and the order is violated, this shall be deemed a violation of these probation conditions, and may result in the filing of an accusation and/or petition to revoke probation.

2. Comply with the Board's Probation Program. Respondent shall fully comply with the conditions of the Probation Program established by the Board and cooperate with representatives of the Board in its monitoring and investigation of the Respondent's compliance with the Board's Probation Program. Respondent shall inform the Board in writing within no more than 15 days of any address change and shall at all times maintain an active, current license status with the Board, including during any period of suspension.

Upon successful completion of probation, Respondent's license shall be fully restored.

3. **Report in Person.** Respondent, during the period of probation, shall appear in person at interviews/meetings as directed by the Board or its designated representatives.

4. **Residency, Practice, or Licensure Outside of State.** Periods of residency or practice as a registered nurse outside of California shall not apply toward a reduction of this probation time period. Respondent's probation is tolled, if and when she resides outside of California. Respondent must provide written notice to the Board within 15 days of any change of residency or practice outside the state, and within 30 days prior to re-establishing residency or returning to practice in this state.

Respondent shall provide a list of all states and territories where she has ever been licensed as a registered nurse, vocational nurse, or practical nurse. Respondent shall further provide information regarding the status of each license and any changes in such license status during the term of probation. Respondent shall inform the Board if she applies for or obtains a new nursing license during the term of probation.

5. **Submit Written Reports.** Respondent, during the period of probation, shall submit or cause to be submitted such written reports/declarations and verification of actions under penalty of perjury, as required by the Board. These reports/declarations shall contain statements relative to Respondent's compliance with all the conditions of the Board's Probation Program. Respondent shall immediately execute all release of information forms as may be required by the Board or its representatives.

Respondent shall provide a copy of this Decision to the nursing regulatory agency in every state and territory in which she has a registered nurse license.

6. Function as a Registered Nurse. Respondent, during the period of probation, shall engage in the practice of registered nursing in California for a minimum of 24 hours per week for 6 consecutive months or as determined by the Board.

For purposes of compliance with the section, "engage in the practice of registered nursing" may include, when approved by the Board, volunteer work as a registered nurse, or work in any non-direct patient care position that requires licensure as a registered nurse.

The Board may require that advanced practice nurses engage in advanced practice nursing

for a minimum of 24 hours per week for 6 consecutive months or as determined by the Board.

If Respondent has not complied with this condition during the probationary term, and Respondent has presented sufficient documentation of her good faith efforts to comply with this condition, and if no other conditions have been violated, the Board, in its discretion, may grant an extension of Respondent's probation period up to one year without further hearing in order to comply with this condition. During the one year extension, all original conditions of probation shall apply.

7. **Employment Approval and Reporting Requirements.** Respondent shall obtain prior approval from the Board before commencing or continuing any employment, paid or voluntary, as a registered nurse. Respondent shall cause to be submitted to the Board all performance evaluations and other employment related reports as a registered nurse upon request of the Board.

Respondent shall provide a copy of this Decision to her employer and immediate supervisors prior to commencement of any nursing or other health care related employment.

In addition to the above, Respondent shall notify the Board in writing within seventy-two (72) hours after she obtains any nursing or other health care related employment. Respondent shall notify the Board in writing within seventy-two (72) hours after she is terminated or separated, regardless of cause, from any nursing, or other health care related employment with a full explanation of the circumstances surrounding the termination or separation.

8. **Supervision.** Respondent shall obtain prior approval from the Board regarding Respondent's level of supervision and/or collaboration before commencing or continuing any employment as a registered nurse, or education and training that includes patient care.

Respondent shall practice only under the direct supervision of a registered nurse in good standing (no current discipline) with the Board of Registered Nursing, unless alternative methods of supervision and/or collaboration (e.g., with an advanced practice nurse or physician) are approved.

Respondent's level of supervision and/or collaboration may include, but is not limited to the following:

- (a) Maximum The individual providing supervision and/or collaboration is present in the patient care area or in any other work setting at all times.
- (b) Moderate The individual providing supervision and/or collaboration is in the patient care unit or in any other work setting at least half the hours Respondent works.
- (c) Minimum The individual providing supervision and/or collaboration has person-toperson communication with Respondent at least twice during each shift worked.
- (d) Home Health Care If Respondent is approved to work in the home health care setting, the individual providing supervision and/or collaboration shall have person-to-person communication with Respondent as required by the Board each work day. Respondent shall maintain telephone or other telecommunication contact with the individual providing supervision and/or collaboration as required by the Board during each work day. The individual providing supervision and/or collaboration shall conduct, as required by the Board, periodic, on-site visits to patients' homes visited by Respondent with or without Respondent present.
- 9. **Employment Limitations.** Respondent shall not work for a nurse's registry, in any private duty position as a registered nurse, a temporary nurse placement agency, a traveling nurse, or for an in-house nursing pool.

Respondent shall not work for a licensed home health agency as a visiting nurse unless the registered nursing supervision and other protections for home visits have been approved by the Board. Respondent shall not work in any other registered nursing occupation where home visits are required.

Respondent shall not work in any health care setting as a supervisor of registered nurses.

The Board may additionally restrict Respondent from supervising licensed vocational nurses and/or unlicensed assistive personnel on a case-by-case basis.

Respondent shall not work as a faculty member in an approved school of nursing or as an instructor in a Board approved continuing education program.

Respondent shall work only on a regularly assigned, identified and predetermined worksite(s) and shall not work in a float capacity.

If Respondent is working or intends to work in excess of 40 hours per week, the Board may

request documentation to determine whether there should be restrictions on the hours of work.

10. Complete a Nursing Course(s). Respondent, at her own expense, shall enroll and successfully complete a course(s) relevant to the practice of registered nursing no later than six months prior to the end of her probationary term.

Respondent shall obtain prior approval from the Board before enrolling in the course(s). Respondent shall submit to the Board the original transcripts or certificates of completion for the above required course(s). The Board shall return the original documents to Respondent after photocopying them for its records.

11. **Violation of Probation.** If Respondent violates the conditions of her probation, the Board after giving Respondent notice and an opportunity to be heard, may set aside the stay order and impose the stayed discipline (revocation/suspension) of Respondent's license.

If during the period of probation, an accusation or petition to revoke probation has been filed against Respondent's license or the Attorney General's Office has been requested to prepare an accusation or petition to revoke probation against Respondent's license, the probationary period shall automatically be extended and shall not expire until the accusation or petition has been acted upon by the Board.

12. License Surrender. During Respondent's term of probation, if she ceases practicing due to retirement, health reasons or is otherwise unable to satisfy the conditions of probation, Respondent may surrender her license to the Board. The Board reserves the right to evaluate Respondent's request and to exercise its discretion whether to grant the request, or to take any other action deemed appropriate and reasonable under the circumstances, without further hearing. Upon formal acceptance of the tendered license and wall certificate, Respondent will no longer be subject to the conditions of probation.

Surrender of Respondent's license shall be considered a disciplinary action and shall become a part of Respondent's license history with the Board. A registered nurse whose license has been surrendered may petition the Board for reinstatement no sooner than the following minimum periods from the effective date of the disciplinary decision:

(1) Two years for reinstatement of a license that was surrendered for any reason other

than a mental or physical illness; or

- (2) One year for a license surrendered for a mental or physical illness.
- 13. **Physical Examination.** Within 45 days of the effective date of this Decision, Respondent, at her expense, shall have a licensed physician, nurse practitioner, or physician assistant, who is approved by the Board before the assessment is performed, submit an assessment of the Respondent's physical condition and capability to perform the duties of a registered nurse. Such an assessment shall be submitted in a format acceptable to the Board. If medically determined, a recommended treatment program will be instituted and followed by the Respondent with the physician, nurse practitioner, or physician assistant providing written reports to the Board on forms provided by the Board.

If Respondent is determined to be unable to practice safely as a registered nurse, the licensed physician, nurse practitioner, or physician assistant making this determination shall immediately notify the Board and Respondent by telephone, and the Board shall request that the Attorney General's office prepare an accusation or petition to revoke probation. Respondent shall immediately cease practice and shall not resume practice until notified by the Board. During this period of suspension, Respondent shall not engage in any practice for which a license issued by the Board is required until the Board has notified Respondent that a medical determination permits Respondent to resume practice. This period of suspension will not apply to the reduction of this probationary time period.

If Respondent fails to have the above assessment submitted to the Board within the 45-day requirement, Respondent shall immediately cease practice and shall not resume practice until notified by the Board. This period of suspension will not apply to the reduction of this probationary time period. The Board may waive or postpone this suspension only if significant, documented evidence of mitigation is provided. Such evidence must establish good faith efforts by Respondent to obtain the assessment, and a specific date for compliance must be provided. Only one such waiver or extension may be permitted.

14. Participate in Treatment/Rehabilitation Program for Chemical Dependence.

Respondent, at her expense, shall successfully complete during the probationary period or shall

have successfully completed prior to commencement of probation a Board-approved treatment/rehabilitation program of at least six months duration. As required, reports shall be submitted by the program on forms provided by the Board. If Respondent has not completed a Board-approved treatment/rehabilitation program prior to commencement of probation, Respondent, within 45 days from the effective date of the decision, shall be enrolled in a program. If a program is not successfully completed within the first nine months of probation, the Board shall consider Respondent in violation of probation.

Based on Board recommendation, each week Respondent shall be required to attend at least one, but no more than five 12-step recovery meetings or equivalent (e.g., Narcotics Anonymous, Alcoholics Anonymous, etc.) and a nurse support group as approved and directed by the Board. If a nurse support group is not available, an additional 12-step meeting or equivalent shall be added. Respondent shall submit dated and signed documentation confirming such attendance to the Board during the entire period of probation. Respondent shall continue with the recovery plan recommended by the treatment/rehabilitation program or a licensed mental health examiner and/or other ongoing recovery groups.

15. Abstain from Use of Psychotropic (Mood-Altering) Drugs. Respondent shall completely abstain from the possession, injection or consumption by any route of all controlled substances and all psychotropic (mood altering) drugs, including alcohol, except when the same are ordered by a health care professional legally authorized to do so as part of documented medical treatment. Respondent shall have sent to the Board, in writing and within fourteen (14) days, by the prescribing health professional, a report identifying the medication, dosage, the date the medication was prescribed, the Respondent's prognosis, the date the medication will no longer be required, and the effect on the recovery plan, if appropriate.

Respondent shall identify for the Board a single physician, nurse practitioner or physician assistant who shall be aware of Respondent's history of substance abuse and will coordinate and monitor any prescriptions for Respondent for dangerous drugs, controlled substances or moodaltering drugs. The coordinating physician, nurse practitioner, or physician assistant shall report to the Board on a quarterly basis Respondent's compliance with this condition. If any substances

considered addictive have been prescribed, the report shall identify a program for the time limited use of any such substances.

The Board may require the single coordinating physician, nurse practitioner, or physician assistant to be a specialist in addictive medicine, or to consult with a specialist in addictive medicine.

16. Submit to Tests and Samples. Respondent, at her expense, shall participate in a random, biological fluid testing or a drug screening program which the Board approves. The length of time and frequency will be subject to approval by the Board. Respondent is responsible for keeping the Board informed of Respondent's current telephone number at all times. Respondent shall also ensure that messages may be left at the telephone number when she is not available and ensure that reports are submitted directly by the testing agency to the Board, as directed. Any confirmed positive finding shall be reported immediately to the Board by the program and Respondent shall be considered in violation of probation.

In addition, Respondent, at any time during the period of probation, shall fully cooperate with the Board or any of its representatives, and shall, when requested, submit to such tests and samples as the Board or its representatives may require for the detection of alcohol, narcotics, hypnotics, dangerous drugs, or other controlled substances.

If Respondent has a positive drug screen for any substance not legally authorized and not reported to the coordinating physician, nurse practitioner, or physician assistant, and the Board files a petition to revoke probation or an accusation, the Board may suspend Respondent from practice pending the final decision on the petition to revoke probation or the accusation. This period of suspension will not apply to the reduction of this probationary time period.

If Respondent fails to participate in a random, biological fluid testing or drug screening program within the specified time frame, Respondent shall immediately cease practice and shall not resume practice until notified by the Board. After taking into account documented evidence of mitigation, if the Board files a petition to revoke probation or an accusation, the Board may suspend Respondent from practice pending the final decision on the petition to revoke probation or the accusation. This period of suspension will not apply to the reduction of this probationary

time period.

17. **Mental Health Examination.** Respondent shall, within 45 days of the effective date of this Decision, have a mental health examination including psychological testing as appropriate to determine her capability to perform the duties of a registered nurse. The examination will be performed by a psychiatrist, psychologist or other licensed mental health practitioner approved by the Board. The examining mental health practitioner will submit a written report of that assessment and recommendations to the Board. All costs are the responsibility of Respondent. Recommendations for treatment, therapy or counseling made as a result of the mental health examination will be instituted and followed by Respondent.

If Respondent is determined to be unable to practice safely as a registered nurse, the licensed mental health care practitioner making this determination shall immediately notify the Board and Respondent by telephone, and the Board shall request that the Attorney General's office prepare an accusation or petition to revoke probation. Respondent shall immediately cease practice and may not resume practice until notified by the Board. During this period of suspension, Respondent shall not engage in any practice for which a license issued by the Board is required, until the Board has notified Respondent that a mental health determination permits Respondent to resume practice. This period of suspension will not apply to the reduction of this probationary time period.

If Respondent fails to have the above assessment submitted to the Board within the 45-day requirement, Respondent shall immediately cease practice and shall not resume practice until notified by the Board. This period of suspension will not apply to the reduction of this probationary time period. The Board may waive or postpone this suspension only if significant, documented evidence of mitigation is provided. Such evidence must establish good faith efforts by Respondent to obtain the assessment, and a specific date for compliance must be provided. Only one such waiver or extension may be permitted.

18. **Therapy or Counseling Program.** Respondent, at her expense, shall participate in an on-going counseling program until such time as the Board releases her from this requirement and only upon the recommendation of the counselor. Written progress reports from the counselor

1 **ACCEPTANCE** 2 I have carefully read the above Stipulated Settlement and Disciplinary Order and have fully 3 discussed it with my attorney, Kevin C. Murphy, Esq. I understand the stipulation and the effect 4 it will have on my Registered Nurse License. I enter into this Stipulated Settlement and 5 Disciplinary Order voluntarily, knowingly, and intelligently, and agree to be bound by the 6 7 Decision and Order of the Board of Registered Nursing. 8 9 10 11 I have read and fully discussed with Respondent Katherine Naomi Higgins the terms and 12 conditions and other matters contained in the above Stipulated Settlement and Disciplinary Order. 13 I approve its form and content. 14 DATED: Kevin C. Murphy, Esq. 15 Attorney for Respondent 16 17 **ENDORSEMENT** 18 The foregoing Stipulated Settlement and Disciplinary Order is hereby respectfully 19 submitted for consideration by the Board of Registered Nursing of the Department of Consumer 20 Affairs. Respectfully submitted, Dated: 21 KAMALA D. HARRIS 22 Attorney General of California 23 24 25 Supervising Deputy Attorney General Attorneys for Complainant 26

will be required at various intervals.

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Exhibit A

Statement of Issues No. 2012-318

	,		
1	KAMALA D. HARRIS		
2	Attorney General of California FRANK H. PACOE		
3	Supervising Deputy Attorney General State Bar No. 91740		
4	455 Golden Gate Avenue, Suite 11000 San Francisco, CA 94102-7004		
5	Telephone: (415) 703-5556 Facsimile: (415) 703-5480		
6	Attorneys for Complainant		
7	BEFORE THE BOARD OF REGISTERED NURSING		
8	DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS STATE OF CALIFORNIA		
9			
10	In the Matter of the Statement of Issues Against: Case No. 2012 - 318		
11	KATHERINE NAOMI HIGGINS STATEMENT OF ISSUES		
12	4328 Lorren Drive		
13	Fremont, CA 94536		
14	Applicant.		
15	Compleinant alla acco		
	Complainant alleges:		
16	PARTIES OF THE POLICE OF THE PARTIES		
17	1. Louise R. Bailey, M.Ed., RN (Complainant) brings this Statement of Issues solely in		
18	her official capacity as the Executive Officer of the Board of Registered Nursing, Department of		
19	Consumer Affairs.		
20,	2. On or about February 17, 2011, the Board of Registered Nursing, Department of		
21	Consumer Affairs received an application for a Registered Nurse License from Katherine Naomi		
22	Higgins (Applicant). On or about February 3, 2011, Katherine Naomi Higgins certified under		
23	penalty of perjury to the truthfulness of all statements, answers, and representations in the		
24	application. The Board denied the application on May 26, 2011.		
25	<u>JURISDICTION</u>		
26	3. This Statement of Issues is brought before the Board of Registered Nursing (Board),		
27	Department of Consumer Affairs, under the authority of the following laws. All section		
28	references are to the Business and Professions Code unless otherwise indicated.		

STATUTORY PROVISIONS

- 4. Section 2736 of the Business and Professions Code provides, in pertinent part, that the Board of Registered Nursing (Board) may deny a license when it finds that the applicant has committed any acts constituting grounds for denial of licensure under section 480 of that Code.
 - 5. Section 480 of the Business and Professions Code states:
- "(a) A board may deny a license regulated by this code on the grounds that the applicant has one of the following:
- "(1) Been convicted of a crime. A conviction within the meaning of this section means a plea or verdict of guilty or a conviction following a plea of nolo contendere. Any action that a board is permitted to take following the establishment of a conviction may be taken when the time for appeal has elapsed, or the judgment of conviction has been affirmed on appeal, or when an order granting probation is made suspending the imposition of sentence, irrespective of a subsequent order under the provisions of Section 1203.4 of the Penal Code.
- "(2) Done any act involving dishonesty, fraud, or deceit with the intent to substantially benefit himself or herself or another, or substantially injure another.
- "(3) (A) Done any act that if done by a licentiate of the business or profession in question, would be grounds for suspension or revocation of license.
- "(B) The board may deny a license pursuant to this subdivision only if the crime or act is substantially related to the qualifications, functions, or duties of the business or profession for which application is made.
- "(b) Notwithstanding any other provision of this code, no person shall be denied a license solely on the basis that he or she has been convicted of a felony if he or she has obtained a certificate of rehabilitation under Chapter 3.5 (commencing with Section 4852.01) of Title 6 of Part 3 of the Penal Code or that he or she has been convicted of a misdemeanor if he or she has met all applicable requirements of the criteria of rehabilitation developed by the board to evaluate the rehabilitation of a person when considering the denial of a license under subdivision (a) of Section 482.

- "(c) A board may deny a license regulated by this code on the ground that the applicant knowingly made a false statement of fact required to be revealed in the application for the license."
 - 6. Section 2761 of the Business and Professions Code states:

"The board may take disciplinary action against a certified or licensed nurse or deny an application for a certificate or license for any of the following:

- "(a) Unprofessional conduct, which includes, but is not limited to, the following:
- "(f) Conviction of a felony or of any offense substantially related to the qualifications, functions, and duties of a registered nurse, in which event the record of the conviction shall be conclusive evidence thereof.
 - 7. Section 2762 of the Business and Professions Code, in pertinent part, states:

"In addition to other acts constituting unprofessional conduct within the meaning of this chapter [the Nursing Practice Act], it is unprofessional conduct for a person licensed under this chapter to do any of the following:

- "(b) Use any controlled substance as defined in Division 10 (commencing with Section 11000) of the Health and Safety Code, or any dangerous drug or dangerous device as defined in Section 4022, or alcoholic beverages, to an extent or in a manner dangerous or injurious to himself or herself, any other person, or the public or to the extent that such use impairs his or her ability to conduct with safety to the public the practice authorized by his or her license.
- 8. Section 1444 of title 16 of the California Code of Regulations provides that a conviction or act shall be considered to be substantially related to the qualifications, functions or duties of a registered nurse if to a substantial degree it evidences the present or potential unfitness of a registered nurse to practice in a manner consistent with the public health, safety, or welfare.

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FIRST CAUSE FOR DENIAL OF APPLICATION

(Criminal Conviction)

- 9. Applicant's application is subject to denial under Business and Professions Code sections 480(a)(1) and 2761(f) in that she was convicted of a crime or act that is substantially related to the qualifications, functions, or and duties of a registered nurse. The circumstances are as follows:
- a. On or about May 4, 2010, in a criminal proceeding entitled <u>People of the State</u> of <u>California v. Katherine N. Higgins</u> in San Diego County Superior Court, Case No.CN274472, the applicant was convicted by her plea of guilty for violating Vehicle Code section 23103(a) (reckless driving), a misdemeanor. Because the applicant pled guilty to a charge of violating Vehicle Code section 23103 (reckless driving) in satisfaction of, or as a substitute for, an original charge of a violation of Vehicle Code section 23152 (driving under the influence), the applicant was sentenced under Vehicle Code section 23103.5.
- b. The circumstances surrounding this conviction are that on or about February 26, 2010, at 0148 hours, a police officer from the Oceanside Police Department noticed a motor vehicle operated by applicant travel through an intersection a high rate of speed and make a left turn through a red light. The officer followed the vehicle and noticed that the driver had difficulty in staying in her traffic lane. The police officer initiated a traffic enforcement stop and observed the applicant exhibited the objective symptoms of intoxication, such as watery bloodshot eyes, slowed slurred speech, and smelled of an alcoholic beverage. Thereafter, the officer administered Standardized Field Sobriety Tests (SFST) to the applicant which she failed to perform satisfactory. The applicant admitted to the officer that she had consumed alcoholic beverages. The applicant provided the officer with two breath samples using a Preliminary Alcohol Screening (PAS) device. Based on the results of the PAS test, the applicant's substandard performance on the Field Sobriety Tests, and the applicant's objective symptoms of intoxication, the police officer placed the applicant under arrest for driving under the influence. Court records indicate that the applicant's blood alcohol level was .23%.

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c. On or about May 4, 2010, the applicant was sentenced to 1 day in the County Jail, ordered to serve 10 days in the Public Service Program, placed on probation for 3 years, ordered to pay fines and fees, and ordered to enroll and complete a 9 month First Conviction Program.

SECOND CAUSE FOR DENIAL OF APPLICATION

(Unprofessional Conduct – If Act Committed by Licentiate)

10. Applicant's application is subject to denial under section 480(a)(3) of the Business and Professions Code in that she committed acts which if done by a licentiate of the business or profession in question, would be grounds for suspension or revocation of license. The applicant would be subject to disciplinary action under Business and Professions Code section 2761(a) on the grounds of unprofessional conduct, as defined by Business and Professions Code section 2762(b), in that on or about February 26, 2010, she used alcoholic beverages to an extent or in a manner dangerous or injurious to herself or others.

PRAYER

WHEREFORE, Complainant requests that a hearing be held on the matters herein alleged, and that following the hearing, the Board of Registered Nursing issue a decision:

- 1. Denying the application of Katherine Naomi Higgins for a Registered Nurse License;
- 2. Taking such other and further action as deemed necessary and proper.

DATED: November 22, 2011

LOUISE R. BAILEY, M.ED., RN

Executive Officer

Board of Registered Nursing

Department of Consumer Affairs

State of California

Complainant

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